

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Kelly Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mrs. Faye Newsome, Mr. Sowder, Mr. Vaughn, Mr. Winns, Mrs. LeeAnn Wiser.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:  
[www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com](http://www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com).
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

Oak Grove Church of Christ Bulletin

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## Is the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) the church of the Bible?

By Derek Long

Jesus told His disciples, "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Jesus promised to build His church. Jesus did not promise to build several different churches but His church (singular). The Bible plainly teaches there is only one body. Ephesians 4:4 says, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling." The body is identified as the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). Therefore, there is only one church according to the Bible. In the world around us, there are several different groups claiming to be the church you can read about in the Bible. All of these groups with their diverse beliefs and practices cannot possibly be the same church. How can we determine which church is the church you can read about in the Bible and how can we determine which churches are not groups you can read about in the Bible? We will use the church of God (Cleveland, TN) as an example for how we can test to determine whether a church fits the description of the church we read about in the Bible or not.

The church of God (Cleveland, TN) does use a scriptural designation to refer to itself. The Bible uses the phrase "church of God" to refer to those people in the church Christ promised to build. Acts 20:28 records Paul's charge to the elders of the church at Ephesus, He says, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own

blood.” The member of the Godhead being referred to in this statement appears to be Christ who gave His blood to purchase the church. The church belongs to God or Christ because He bought it. Paul addresses his letter to the Corinthians, “to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Corinthians 1:2). Other passages referring to the church as the “church of God” include 1 Corinthians 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:5. Many churches claim to be the church of the Bible but we can never read of them in the pages of Scripture. If we are looking for the church of the Bible, we must first find one which describes itself the way the Bible describes the church.

The reference to Cleveland, Tennessee in the title is to show us something about the group we are using as an example. The group calling themselves the church of God we are studying is headquartered in Cleveland, Tennessee. The church we read about in the Bible has Christ as head over all things to it (Ephesians 1:22-23). Christ is not quartered in Cleveland, Tennessee but in heaven. The headquarters for the church you read about in the Bible is thus in heaven not at some earthly location.

The church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) would consider itself a Christian denomination. The church of the Bible is nowhere depicted as a denomination. The church spoken of in the Bible is not part of a larger whole but contains all the saved everywhere (Acts 2:47). Jesus and Paul both disapprove of division among Christians and yet the system of denominationalism relies upon division among people (John 17:20-23; 1 Corinthians 1:10).

The church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) traces its origin back to August 1886. The church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) started too late to be the church you read about in the Bible. The Bible had been completely written almost 1800 years before this church ever began. If we are looking for the church you can read about in the Bible, we need to look for a church which had its

origin on the day of Pentecost following the Lord’s ascension in the city of Jerusalem (Acts 2:4-5, 47).

The church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) has a declaration of faith. The Bible contains all the information needed by a person to be pleasing to God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3). If a declaration of faith says more than the Bible, it says too much. If a declaration of faith says less than the Bible, it says too little. The church of the Bible follows the Bible and rejects all manmade creeds, confessions, declarations of faith, etc.

The church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) believes in people today receiving Holy Spirit baptism and the ability to speak in tongues. Ephesians 4:5 says there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” yet according to the church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) there is both a baptism with the Holy Spirit and a baptism by immersion in water. A church like the church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), which teaches things contrary to the Bible, cannot possibly be the church you read about in the Bible.

We could add other things to this list relating to its organizational structure containing positions and levels you never read about in the Bible, having a decision making body called the General Assembly where voting takes place, their operation of various colleges, the usage of instrumental music in worship, etc. However, we hope the things we have mentioned help you in being able to identify the church of the Bible.